

# THE WRITERS' BEAT

EDITED BY ANNIE DAWID

## “Introducing my Beloved to this Part of the World” by Annie Dawid.



After I send him this picture, he emails back: “Wait a minute! You live in this cabin?! No way you live in this out-of-some-movie cabin?! No way! Okay, can I be your friend?! Please? Please? Okay, I am overwhelmed with this! You should write something romantic out there.”

Of course, in reality, my little cabin has nothing remotely cinematic about it. Compost toilet, perennial mice, flies, a water system that has broken down every winter for seven years and counting, so that many months of each year are devoted to “hauling water,” a new chore unfamiliar to me in my previous existence as a city-dwelling professor living on every grid that exists.

Some of my old colleagues came to visit, and uniformly agreed, “I could never live out here,” and I knew they weren’t talking about the compost toilet, because they hadn’t yet entered the cabin.

But my beloved, also a

writer, was thrilled when he actually visited. “I bet I could finally finish something I started out there,” he said, imagining life off the grid not as a hassle, not as an interminable drive over excessively wash-boarded roads away from what some call “civilization,” but another reality entirely. A place where one can “hear oneself think.”

Pronghorn antelope roam the meadows, sometimes seating themselves at the edges of the road, taking in the morning sun-warmed dirt. Every summer one male, cast off by his group, searches for a new herd. His horns sometimes appear over the crest of the hill a mile from the cabin. He is my sentinel, alerting me to the nearness of home. Surely it’s not the same youngster each of these seven years, but I sense a similar melancholy in these boys. Cast out, seeking community. Perhaps some of my visitors feel the same when they come to this wide

open space without trees. Perhaps they feel cast out of someplace else rather than welcome to this vast land.

Never in my life had I imagined living without trees! I moved here from the excessively verdant Pacific Northwest, where moisture drips incessantly, moss burgeons across rooftops and sidewalks, and the forest overwhelms the trees.

No obvious shelter here, no deterrent to the relentless wind that sweeps the acreage, picking up lightweight rocking chairs from the deck and smashing them, piecemeal, onto the scrub. And yet, there’s something elemental about that openness to sky and cloud and weather of every kind. The hawks glide the thermals and sometimes land for a kill: mice or voles or moles or prairie dogs. Out here, you have to make peace with the critters, or you’ll never survive a year.

Inside, the walls are adorned with my son’s drawings, Aboriginal prints from Pitjantjatjara, bark cloth from Fiji, and hundreds of Crayola-colored bundles of yarn for rugmaking, which also help to pad the uninsulated half-log cabin. Yet the wind can blow them through the cracks and hurl them onto the floor, lift the curtains from the glass with numbing velocity.

What will we look forward to out those single-paned windows? Spectacular cloudscapes, storms that linger in summer, casting hail on the nasturtium flourishing in pots lining the deck. This year, mice gobbled my germinating buds – inside!

New problems announce themselves regularly, and one has to be fertile in creating solutions. Nature is in charge here, not people. I prefer

it that way. He likes the coyotes infiltrating the night silence, and the way unexplained lights pierce the dark. Looking ahead to winter, our fantasies of being snowed in bode well for when the roads slick up, and drifts lace the ridges, when we human beings are really, truly, out of control.



Annie Dawid’s third volume of fiction, **AND DARKNESS WAS UNDER HIS FEET: STORIES OF A FAMILY**, won the Litchfield Review Award for Short Fiction. It is available on amazon.com. Her story: “The Fox Breaks the Code,” won the 2008 Short Short prize on www.literal-latte.com. A former professor of English at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, Annie is raising her son, Isaiah Max, and two dogs, Freddy and Fannie, in her cabin outside of Westcliffe at 9100 feet in the Wet Mountain Valley.

## Shakespeare cont.

in Westcliffe CO has an exciting summer production schedule for 2011. Shakespeare in the Sangres continues in the Amphitheatre behind the Jones Theatre with **Henry IV Part 1** and **As You Like It**. Now in its 5th season, the festival features professional directors and college acting interns from around the country with local talent to produce a wonderful repertory ensemble.

In **Henry IV**, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. Henry IV has just been crowned but his hold on the office is tenuous at best. Rebellion is imminent. Meanwhile Prince Hal and his best pal, the venerated drunk Falstaff, are carousing around London without a care. Watch as Hal grows up enough to defend the crown that will eventually be his, in this highly entertaining and comedic history play.

In **As You Like It**, we’re off to the Forest of Arden! This is a story of young love and adventure in the woods where Rosalind dresses as a man to counsel young Orlando in the ways of love; the banished Duke and his merry band experience freedom

and philosophize on the ages of man; and, Touchstone, the clown, wreaks havoc among the country bumpkins of the forest. ‘All the world’s a stage’ in this frolicking, fun, and classic comedy!

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for students 16 and under and \$5 for kids under 12. **Henry IV** runs at 6:30 pm Thursdays June 16, 23, and 30, and Saturdays June 18, 25, and July 2. **As You Like It** runs at 6:30 pm Fridays June 17, 24 and July 1 and Sundays at 2:00 pm June 19, 26 and July 3. See both shows in one weekend!

Neil Simon’s classic comedy **Barefoot in the Park** follows in July. This delightful romantic comedy focuses on newlyweds, Corie and Paul, as they begin married life in a tiny 5th floor walk up apartment in Manhattan. Adjusting to married isn’t so easy with oddball neighbors, a mother-in-law and a rundown apartment. Go from newlywed to near breakup in this classic comedy.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for students 16 and under and \$5 for kids under 12. Shows at 7:30 pm July 22, 23, 28, 29, and 30 with a Sunday matinee July 24 at 2:00 pm

The WCPA also features a **Creativity Camp** for children ages 7

to 16. Sign your kids up for laughter, theatre games and improvisation with a final play for family and friends. This year’s camp runs June 27 through July 8, Monday – Friday 10am to 1pm. The camp tuition is \$100 per child.

Creativity Camp Graduates are featured in our Youth Theatre Musical, **The Real Story of Red Riding Hood**. The story of Red Riding Hood is told from the wolf’s perspective! ! Ticket are \$10 for

adults and \$5 for kids under 12. Shows at 7:00 pm August 11, 12, and 13 with a Sunday matinee at 2:00 pm on August 14.

Finally the season closes with **New Rocky Mountain Voices**. An assortment of award winning one-act and 10-minute plays are presented September 2 & 3. Tickets and \$10 for adults (this show may not be appropriate for children. Shows at 7:30 pm September 2 and 3.



**IF ITS HAPPENING ANYWHERE FROM SALIDA TO CANON CITY TO PUEBLO AND BEYOND! IT'S IN THE BEAT. WHERE ARE YOU?**

**DEADLINE FOR ADS IS THE 15TH OF THE MONTH  
DEADLINE FOR THE CALENDAR IS THE 20TH OF THE MONTH**